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MACKINAC BRIDGE AUTHORITY

N415 I-75 ST. IGNACE, MICHIGAN 49781 906-643-7600 FAX: 906-643-7668

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Kim Nowack, Mackinac Bridge Authority, 906-643-7600

Mackinac Bridge enters the busy season for traffic and for maintenance work

May 25, 2021 -- As traffic picks up on the Mackinac Bridge for the traditional increase in warmer season travel, so does the work required to maintain this engineering icon.

Contractor Seaway Painting is wrapping up five seasons devoted to stripping and repainting the bridge's twin ivory towers. At the same time, the Mackinac Bridge Authority's (MBA) team of dedicated maintenance staff is out on the bridge deck, replacing pieces of the original decking, repairing deck joints, and cleaning off a winter's worth of grit tracked onto the bridge.

"Like with road work and maintenance anywhere else, the season for taking care of the Mackinac Bridge coincides with the peak of tourism travel in northern Michigan," said MBA Executive Secretary Kim Nowack. "We realize the views of the Straits of Mackinac are tempting, but we need customers to focus their attention on driving, especially when passing work zones on the bridge."

Delays for work on the bridge are generally minimal, as most lane closures are removed for holidays and peak traffic periods, but in some cases those lane closures must remain in place even when traffic picks up.

"We're all in a hurry to get where we're going, particularly when we're on vacation, but it's critically important that drivers slow down and set aside any distractions when they are passing through one of our work zones," Nowack said. "A moment of inattention could result in a terrible tragedy."

What typically results in traffic backups at the bridge is the surge of weekend traffic from late spring through fall, particularly from 2 to 6 p.m. on Fridays, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sundays. Even with all toll booths open, the sheer volume of traffic sometimes exceeds the capacity of the toll workers. The bridge takes many types of payment now, including cash, credit/debit cards, Apple Pay/Google Pay, and MacPass, which is the fastest transaction type.

"Our toll workers are always doing the best they can to get drivers through the toll booths as quickly as possible," Nowack said. "We just ask that customers exercise their patience as they approach the booths."

Live traffic camera views of the bridge, updates on bridge conditions, toll rates, and information on the MacPass program can all be found on the MBA website:

www.MackinacBridge.org.

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